

and miles to go before I sleep by inkyreveries

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: M/M

Language: English

Characters: Billy Hargrove, Steve Harrington

Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington

Status: Completed

Published: 2018-02-28

Updated: 2018-02-28

Packaged: 2022-04-21 15:15:11

Rating: Explicit

Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Chapters: 1

Words: 3,978

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

Steve used to hate the night. Things change.

and miles to go before I sleep

Steve used to hate the night. It's not that he was *afraid* of the dark—he *wasn't*—he just didn't like it. He couldn't fucking sleep, anxiety gnawing at his insides until he thought he was going to be sick. It didn't help that the pool was right outside his window, so the sickly blue glow filtered through his room at night to taunt him: *Barb died in your pool. There was a monster right down there and it killed Barb in your pool.* He usually spent most of the night tossing and turning at any rustle of the bushes outside or creak of the floorboards down the hall and shoving his face into the pillow to block out the goddamn pool light that managed to sneak into his bedroom even with the shades drawn.

When he did manage to sleep, it was never really that satisfying; he was always back in those tunnels, air so dark and horrible you can *taste it*, hearing the rush of hundreds of feet as he clung to Dustin and knew it was toolatetoolatetoolate, there wasn't enough time to get him out and he was going to die down here, they were both going to die down here, the monsters were coming, the monsters are *here*, please God let it be quick—

Steve would wake up gasping, sweat-drenched, a little too close to crying, fumble for the bat leaning against his nightstand and wrap shaking fingers around it—just in case. It always took a few minutes for him to remember that the monsters were gone, that they weren't about to come out of his fucking wall and tear him to shreds.

But then again, he'd thought the monsters were gone once before, so he never really felt that much better.

He started sleeping with the lights on, started going to parties again because fuck if he was going to spend another night sitting alone in his too big, too empty house waiting for the monsters to come, started stealing swigs of whiskey from his dad's liquor cabinet before bed because sometimes it helped him fall asleep faster (but he still had the nightmares, because whiskey can solve a lot of problems but apparently not that one).

At first, Dustin made fun of him for the circles under his eyes

smudged so purple they looked like bruises—“*Not sleeping, eh, Steve-o? Who’s the lucky girl? C’mon, tell me!*”—but that quickly stopped when Steve half fell asleep at the wheel one morning on the way to school and almost rammed them into a fire hydrant. Then, Dustin started bringing an extra thermos in the car—hot chocolate for him and coffee for Steve—and saying stuff like “you okay buddy? You can always talk to me if you’re having a hard time. Will is too so I’m pretty good at helping with this kinda thing,” and Steve was touched but also felt like a piece of shit because Will had been straight up possessed so of course he would be having a hard time, but all Steve had done was babysit and he still couldn’t fucking *get it together*.

And then, one Friday night in January, things changed.

After dropping Dustin home from the arcade, Steve sat in his car for a long time, staring at the sky. Watching the sunset paint the sky warm made his skin prickle with dread, made him want to drive towards the sun, drive across the whole fucking world chasing the sun so he never had to watch it set again.

“Fuck this,” he muttered and headed in the direction of Linda Johnson’s house, who was throwing a party because her parents were in Chicago. He couldn’t really stand most of the people who showed up at these parties, but the combination of free booze and happy drunk teenagers who most definitely did not believe in monsters was just too appealing to pass up.

Two hours later he was leaning against Linda Johnson’s kitchen counter, nursing his third beer and humming along to Duran, Duran. He was buzzed and warm and, surprised to realize, actually *enjoying* himself.

“What’s King Steve doing at a party all by himself?” He heard Billy Hargrove’s drawl as he sidled up next to him.

Steve stopped enjoying himself.

“Hargrove” he said curtly, and took another sip of his beer.

“Harrington” Billy mocked, grin so wide Steve could see it out of the corner of his eye despite his best efforts to look straight ahead.

Realizing Billy wouldn't just go away, Steve sighed and turned to face him. "What do you want?"

Billy smiled wider and reached into the pocket of his denim jacket, pulling out a crumpled pack of Marlboro Reds. He waved the pack at Steve.

"Want a cigarette?"

Steve stared. Billy hadn't even acknowledged his existence since their fight and here he was, offering him a cigarette?

"Um, I have to finish my beer," he said lamely.

Billy rolled his eyes and snatched the can out of Steve's hands, draining it in one gulp and then belching loudly. "Okay, Harrington, it's finished. Let's go." He turned and walked out of the kitchen without a backwards glance.

Steve, who had never really been known for making good choices, followed.

He found Billy leaning against the side of the house, illuminated by silvery moonlight. Under any other circumstances, Steve would have been sure that following Billy Hargrove alone into the night meant certain death, but something about the full moon breaking up the darkness made him feel like he wasn't about to get murdered. He wasn't positive, though.

He walked over to Billy and leaned against the house next to him, their shoulders brushing. Wordlessly accepting the cigarette Billy tapped out of the pack for him, he let him light it and then closed his eyes, tipping his head back against the brick.

Billy lit his own cigarette, and they smoked together in silence, listening to the muffled thumping of the bass coming from inside, laughter spilling from an upstairs window where some couple had snuck into a bedroom.

"I'm sorry" Billy said, at the same time Steve said "thanks for the smoke."

“What?” Steve snapped his head up to stare at him.

“I’m sorry,” Billy said again, “for what happened the night I—” he gestured to his own face and then trailed off, suddenly captivated by their cigarette butts scattered on the ground.

“Um,” Steve heard himself say for the second time that night, “it’s okay. Don’t sweat it, man.”

Billy met his gaze then, and he wore such a pained expression that Steve froze, unable to look away.

“It wasn’t *you*—I mean, it was, but—I got into it with my old man and I was angry and you were there and I didn’t want to—I never meant to—it just wasn’t supposed to happen.”

Steve watched Billy trip over his words, watched his eyes flicker with a familiar kind of sadness, the kind of bone-deep sadness Steve had seen in his own reflection, and he realized then that he really did not know Billy Hargrove at all.

Maybe it was that realization, or maybe the beer gave him courage, or maybe—and, looking back on it, this seems to be the most likely reason—it was just because he *wanted* to, but Steve found himself reaching for Billy. Unfortunately, his brain caught up with his body roughly .02 seconds after he began reaching out and reminded him that Billy would probably cave his skull in if he touched him right now, so Steve’s hands stopped pitifully in mid-air.

He grimaced as Billy looked slowly down at his hands and then back up at Steve.

Before he could yank his hands back or brace for impact, Billy was in his space, crowding him against the wall.

He didn’t look angry, he looked *haunted*, eyes shining silver.

“Harrington,” he whispered, breath fanning over Steve’s face. And then he was leaning in, softly brushing his lips against Steve’s, just once, just for a second.

Steve stood there, stunned, for just a moment before he was grabbing

fistfuls of Billy's thermal and yanking him closer, slotting their mouths together. Billy tasted like cheap cigarettes and cheaper beer. It wasn't as unpleasant as it sounds.

Steve felt like he had gone from buzzed to wasted in the span of a single kiss as he licked into Billy's mouth; feeling their tongues slide together and realizing that he was kissing a boy—and not just any boy, but *Billy Hargrove*—made him lightheaded.

Billy pulled away from the kiss and pressed his lips to the corner of Steve's mouth, then along his jaw, just under his ear, and finally settled on his neck, nipping at the skin there. Steve sighed and tilted his head to give him better access, sliding his arms from Billy's chest to his hips and pulling him closer.

When Billy slid his knee between Steve's legs and ground against his thigh, Steve couldn't help the gasp that escaped his lips. Billy pulled back from his ministrations to grin wickedly at him and rut against him again. Steve bit his lip hard, not wanting to give Billy the satisfaction of making him moan like a fucking virgin just by brushing his *knee* against his dick.

"Fuck, Billy—" he stuttered, not sure what he wanted but so sure that he wanted it.

"Yeah?" Billy cocked an eyebrow and brushed his hand down Steve's chest to his belt buckle. Steve jerked forward against his touch, a whine on the tip of his tongue.

"What do you want, Harrington?" Billy cooed at him, tongue darting out to brush against Steve's bottom lip.

Steve glared at him, which only seemed to spur him on further.

"Tell me what you want," Billy demanded, and let his hand fall from Steve's buckle to his cock and *squeezed*—

"I want you to suck me off," Steve gasped, so hard he felt like he was going to explode; pride be damned.

Billy's smile widened and he ran his tongue along the front of his teeth; the image of a wolf about to descend upon its prey suddenly

flashed into Steve's mind.

Abruptly, Billy sank to his knees, swiftly undoing Steve's buckle and flicking his jeans open with deft fingers.

Steve hissed as the frigid air hit his already painfully red and swollen cock, but it was short-lived because then Billy was taking him into his mouth and he couldn't think of anything else. He watched Billy with awe, red lips stretched around him, blue eyes watering as he took him deeper, nose pressed against the dark hair trailing from his belly button. He tipped his head back and squeezed his eyes shut, wondering if he'd ever felt this good—wondering if *anything* had ever felt this good.

He felt heat coiling in the pit of his stomach and reached down to grab Billy's curls and urge him to go faster, hips thrusting to meet the heat of his mouth. Steve opened his eyes again and then found he couldn't look away, mesmerized by the sight of Billy on his knees, looking utterly debauched and impossibly beautiful. He came almost instantly after that, came so hard his vision blurred, spilling down Billy's throat.

Steve felt dizzy when it was over, chest heaving as he struggled to tuck himself back into his jeans. He realized then that Billy hadn't moved and was still kneeling in front of Steve, head bowed in—shame? Regret? Steve reached out for Billy for the second time that night, but this time with a lot more certainty that Billy wouldn't punch his lights out (still not 100% sure, but pretty close).

Billy let Steve pull him up to standing, let Steve tilt his head up to look at him. Billy didn't look ashamed; he looked vulnerable, looked much younger than Steve had ever seen him look, as if he were afraid of whatever Steve was going to say next.

So he didn't say anything, but instead swiped a thumb across Billy's lips, watched them part as he breathed out, watched Billy's eyes darken—

And Steve chuckled.

"What?" Billy asked defensively, moving away so Steve's thumb fell

from his mouth.

Steve shook his head and laughed again. "This is just really not what I thought was going to happen when I followed you out here."

Billy laughed then too, happy and light. As soon as he'd heard it, Steve wanted to make him laugh again.

"Yeah, well," Billy tapped out a second cigarette, stuck it between his teeth, and grinned. "I'm full of surprises, Harrington."

And he was.

After that night in January, Steve went home and slept for more than four hours for the first time in months.

It happened again, the following week, in the locker room after practice. Steve was fumbling with his laces for much longer than was necessary, hoping that everyone else would clear out and he'd get Billy alone—Billy, who'd been all sly grins and wagging tongue since Linda's party. Apparently, Billy had other ideas, because he followed Tommy out of the locker room after only a quick shower and barely a glance at Steve. Steve watched him go, disappointment and something that felt too much like rejection unfurling in his chest, and turned to sling his backpack over his shoulder when the locker room door slammed.

It was Billy, corners of his mouth tugging up, arms folded across his chest as he leaned against a row of lockers.

Steve swallowed hard. "Forget something?"

"Yeah," Billy's eyes were twinkling as he moved across the room towards Steve. "I did."

Then it became a *thing*. They started meeting up at the quarry, at Steve's house when his parents were out of town, once even at a matinee of *Tuff Turf*. (Billy rolled his eyes when Steve said it was a

date and called him a sap—but he was smiling and he paid for their popcorn, anyways).

About a month after Linda Johnson's party, Billy didn't sink to his knees, stopped Steve from trying to slide a hand in his jeans, and spread his legs instead, let Steve inside him, watched him with eyes wide and blue and reverent as Steve got lost in the pleasure of it—of *them*. That night was the first night Billy didn't immediately pull on his jeans and rush out the door with a muttered goodbye and eyes averted. Instead, he burrowed his face in Steve's neck, warmth coursing through Steve's body at the tenderness of it. Steve hesitated at first and then gently wrapped his arm around Billy, marveling at the feeling of this new kind of intimacy.

Billy never stayed the night, though. They didn't talk about why. Once, Steve had tried to ask about the bruise blossoming across Billy's side but Billy had clenched his jaw so tightly and stormed out of Steve's house so quickly that he didn't bring it up again, too scared to disrupt the fragile balance of whatever was hanging between them.

Steve didn't really hate the night as much anymore, not when it held the promise of meeting Billy at the quarry or Billy throwing pebbles at his window and then coming to bed, draping Steve over him and sucking on a cigarette when they were both thoroughly fucked out. He still had nightmares, thought maybe he might always have nightmares, but Dustin had stopped bringing him a gallon of coffee every morning and looking at him sideways like a concerned parent (which made Steve feel about six years old), so that was a good sign.

The first time they ever actually *slept* together was in the middle of March. Steve had woken up with a start to pebbles clattering against his window—he had been having a particularly restless night, and it was a few seconds before he could calm down enough to look down at the pool without expecting to see Barb, floating lifeless at the surface. He felt his heartbeat slow a little when he saw Billy, already felt calmer knowing that Billy was there.

Padding downstairs, he flicked on each light switch he passed by; his parents weren't home to scold him for "being too old to be afraid of the dark," as his father liked to remind him, and he still felt a little

uneasy.

All thoughts of his lingering nightmare melted away as soon as he saw Billy, shivering on the other side of the sliding glass door. He was half-frozen, dressed in only a thin Henley and a pair of jeans, blood trickling from a cut on his eyebrow and a bruise beginning to form on his jaw.

“Billy—” Steve started to say, but Billy shook his head, looked up at him with red-rimmed eyes, and the words died in the back of Steve’s throat.

He took Billy’s hand and led him to the bathroom where he sat him on the edge of the tub, Billy letting him dab iodine on his cut and smooth a Band-Aid over his brow.

“Do you want ice? For—” Steve gestured to Billy’s jaw helplessly.

Billy shook his head and looked down, picking a hangnail on his thumb. “Can we,” his voice was hoarse, “can we just go to bed?”

“Of course.” Steve said softly. “Let’s go to bed.”

Billy started sleeping over a lot after that.

Steve warned him he had nightmares sometimes, wouldn’t tell him why, but Billy always waved him off.

Until he actually had one.

He woke up gasping, sweat-soaked and nauseous, the bedside lamp on and Billy standing over him looking pale. “Shit, Harrington, you weren’t kidding about those nightmares.”

Steve tried to smile, tried to look reassuring, but ended up kind of half-grimacing instead. “I’m fine, sorry, just—I just need a minute.” He tucked his head between his legs and took a deep breath through his nose, so embarrassed he felt tears pricking at the back of his eyes.

The bed dipped when Billy sat down next to him. Steve started when

he felt Billy touch him, hand warm and sure at the back of his neck, but then almost immediately relaxed into it, feeling impossibly grateful to not be alone.

“C’mere,” Billy muttered, and Steve obliged, shifting so they could both lay down, pressing his face into Billy’s shoulder and breathing in the scent of him, feeling overwhelmed by how fucking *glad* he was that Billy was here.

“I told you,” he mumbled, voice muffled by Billy’s skin.

Billy didn’t answer, but dropped his nose to Steve’s hair and kissed the top of his head.

“I’ll leave the light on,” he said instead, and pulled Steve closer.

All in all, things were going pretty well. Winter had finally given way to spring, and the warmer weather meant nights spent lounging by the pool, shot-gunning beers and sharing cigarettes, or sitting on the hood of the Camaro at the quarry, passing a joint back and forth. Steve barely had nightmares anymore. Sometimes he tossed and turned, but he always woke to Billy curling his body around Steve’s, shielding him from shadows that looked like monsters and blocking the goddamn pool light from his vision. It was a lot easier to fall back asleep like that.

Billy opened up a little bit about his dad one night, cradling a half-empty bottle of bourbon to his chest as they dangled their legs in the pool. Steve pretended not to notice when Billy swiped angrily at his eyes but his fingers itched for his bat; turns out there’s more than one kind of monster that Steve would like to have a go at.

But the arrival of spring meant that summer was coming, meant graduation and college (or not, in Steve’s case) and leaving Hawkins. By the start of May, graduation was looming over them like a fucking death sentence. They never talked about it; Steve decided he couldn’t bear to hear Billy tell him that he was leaving Hawkins—and Steve—in his rearview the second the ceremony was over, and he was pretty certain that was what was going to happen, given Billy’s undisguised

hatred for the place.

Plus, Billy didn't really seem to care that graduation was approaching, didn't really seem to care that their time as whatever they were was coming to an end. Steve knew he should have expected this from the start—Billy had probably been planning to leave Hawkins from the day he got there—but a pit of dread still formed in his stomach. It seemed like the days were getting shorter, seemed like time was slipping away from them. Steve felt panicked, untethered, like he was reaching out for Billy but Billy was moving farther and farther away.

Steve stopped sleeping. He started having nightmares again, but this time there weren't any monsters, only Billy laughing, cruel and low as he tells him it was all *bullshit*, Billy snickering to Tommy about how he got King Steve to play his bitch, Steve waking up to an empty bed, Billy *leaving*—

Steve jolts awake, heart thudding in his chest. Billy's still sound asleep next to him, one errant curl resting on his cheekbone.

He's so fucking beautiful, Steve thinks, and it makes his heart ache.

His room feels stuffy all of a sudden, so Steve gets up quietly and makes his way down to the kitchen. The clock on the oven reads 5:43.

"Great," he sighs to himself, sinking into an armchair and staring absently outside. The sky is beginning to lighten. Steve and Billy are graduating in three days. In three days, Steve is going to lose Billy. It was inevitable—he's come to terms with it now—but his throat still tightens as he thinks about how it will feel to wake up in four days and know that Billy is gone.

It's funny, he muses, how even though it's only been a few months, he suddenly can't imagine Hawkins without Billy.

(It's not actually all that funny).

"Harrington," he hears, and turns around. Billy is standing behind him, messy-haired and bleary-eyed, lines from the pillowcase

creasing his cheek and looking bewildered.

Steve realizes right then that he loves him. Realizes that he's not going to let this go. He stands up, looks at Billy like he did all those months ago outside Linda Johnson's house, when he first realized he didn't know Billy Hargrove at all.

But he knows him now.

"What is it?" Billy looks more alert now and is staring at Steve, concerned.

"I sleep so much better when you're around," Steve blurts out.

"Okay..." Billy says slowly, tilting his head in confusion.

"I *do*. And I think I would like to...always fall asleep with you around." Steve's palms are getting sweaty and he's not sure that he's making any sense, because Billy is still staring at him, head tilted, but he plows on anyways. "I mean—maybe—if you wanted, we could, like, get an apartment somewhere after graduation? I dunno what your plans are, and if you don't want to that's cool, I was just thinking..." Steve trails off lamely.

Billy still hasn't moved, blinking at Steve for a long minute while Steve feels his heart drop all the way to the soles of his feet.

"You...want...to move *in* with me?" Billy echoes.

Steve nods, not trusting himself to speak without babbling again.

And then a smile is spreading across Billy's face, huge and real and fucking *luminous* and Steve can feel his fingers again because he loves Billy and now he's pretty sure Billy loves him, too.

Billy crosses the room to Steve and slides his hands down his chest to his waist, eyes dancing as he pulls him close.

"How do you feel about California, pretty boy?"

Author's Note:

@inkyreveries on tumblr! Come say hi and send me prompts!